

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 and 11-22 are pending in the present application. Claim 10 has been cancelled. Claims 1-3, 5-8 and 15-22 are allowed, and claims 10-12 are objected to for containing allowable subject matter. Claims 9, 13 and 14 have been rejected. Claims 1, 4, 9, 12-13 have been amended, and claims 1, 9 and 16 are independent.

Allowable Subject Matter

Initially, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 1-3, 5-8 and 15-22 are allowable, and that claims 10-12 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten into independent form. Applicants note that claim 10 has been cancelled, the subject of which has been incorporated into newly amended independent claim 9. Accordingly, Applicants submit that independent claim 9, and those claims dependent thereon, are believed to be in condition for allowance in view of the allowable subject matter incorporated therein.

Claim Objections

Claims 4, 11 and 12 have been objected to because of minor claim informalities. Applicants have amended claims 4 and 12 to overcome the objection by the Examiner. Claim 11, by virtue of its dependence on newly amended claim 9, is believed to have sufficiently overcome the objection. Claim 1 has also been amended to clarify a minor misspelling. Applicants submit that the amendments to claims 1, 4 and 12 are non-narrowing in nature and were made only for clarification purposes, and are not related to reasons of patentability. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objections to these claims is respectfully submitted.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claim 13 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph for insufficient antecedent basis. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 13. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully submitted.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 9 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Giles et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,411,751). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 9 has been amended. Applicants submit that Giles does not teach each of the features recited in newly amended claim 9. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection to claim 9 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the objections and rejections and allowance of each of claims 1-24 in connection with the present application is earnestly solicited.

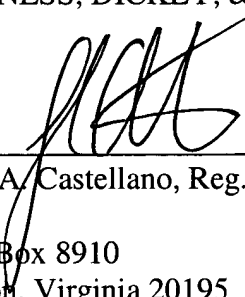
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact John A. Castellano at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By



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